

Remarks of
Hon. Gabsha A. Grow

1898

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INDEPENDENCE OF CUBA.

REMARKS

OF

HON. GALUSHA A. GROW,
OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH 31, 1898.

WASHINGTON,

1898.

REMARKS

OF

HON. GALUSHA A. GROW.

The House having under consideration the naval appropriation bill—

Mr. GROW said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am induced to trespass upon the attention of the committee for a few minutes by the remark of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BAILEY] that if Congress had recognized the Cuban patriots as belligerents this war would have ended long since. This prediction of what might have happened if something had been done that was not done leads me to claim the attention of the House briefly.

Belligerency means what? That the Government recognizes two parties in a contest as engaged in a war for supremacy. That would not relieve this Government from its obligation of strict neutrality between them. It would have to maintain it the same as it has been doing. Not a gun, not a man could go to help the Cuban patriots under belligerency that can not go to-day. They could have had no aid nor assistance more than they have had during this time that the Government has been watching these movements.

This Government made England pay over \$15,000,000 for not observing strict neutrality after she had recognized the belligerent rights of the Confederates in our civil war, and we should have involved ourselves in the danger of a war long before this had belligerency been recognized. Spain would stop an American vessel to overhaul it to see if it had contraband of war, and the doctrine of this Government, proclaimed and maintained in the second war of independence, was that the flag protected all over which it floated and no right of search could be permitted to any nation.

A chance shot would have opened all the bloody drama of a war long ago, in my judgment; and my prediction is just as good

as the prediction of the gentleman from Texas that the war would have been ended.

Belligerency, therefore, would have been of no advantage to the patriots on the Island of Cuba. I have regarded this question from the first, Mr. Chairman, as simply resolving itself into one thing in the end.

When the day should come when this Government would feel justified in its own right and position on this hemisphere, in view of the public sentiment of the Christian world, to recognize the independence of Cuba, then it would become our duty as American citizens, our duty to the country and to the common cause of liberty and the rights of humanity, to maintain and declare the independence of the patriots of Cuba; and that would be a warning to Spain that she must withdraw her control over Cuba, and if it was not done it might then be the duty of this Government to intervene with military force.

There was a time when the Spanish flag floated over more of this hemisphere than the flags of all other nations, and she had on this continent more territory than any other nation. But she has lost it all. Cuba and Puerto Rico is all of this mighty possession that is left under her flag. The day is soon to come when Cuba must be free; and it is only a question of time. I would say to gentlemen you can have war any day. That question will keep. No danger of losing the opportunity. [Laughter.]

That seems to be the trouble with our impatient friends on the other side, that they are afraid of losing a chance for war. [Laughter and applause.] Mr. Chairman, when the time comes for the recognition of the independence of Cuba, and I think it is near, if war must come as a result, I think a little delay of the war would be better. If we are to begin the war in the rainy season in Cuba, what would be the effect? The men sent to Cuba, not acclimated, would, most of them, find a grave in the island in the rainy season, the same as the Spanish soldier.

The climate has killed more Spanish soldiers than the arms of the patriots, and will continue to do so. God Almighty is on the side of the patriots in Cuba, and their salvation will soon come through the aid of climatic influences. It is impossible for a nation to bring soldiers enough 3,000 miles over the ocean to conquer a



brave people, though they may be comparatively few in numbers, as our fathers proved in the Revolution. From reliable information from two hundred and fifty to sixty thousand Spanish soldiers have been sent to Cuba.

[Here the hammer fell.]

Mr. GROW. If the House will indulge me for a couple of minutes, I shall be through.

There was no objection.

Mr. GROW. Spain has sent of her sons already 250,000 or 260,000 to Cuba, and to-day, by the best information that can be obtained, there are probably not to exceed 30,000 fit to take the field. How long would it take her to conquer Cuba?

The climate has done its work and will continue to do its work; and when the rainy season is over this year, Spain must send reinforcements again, as she has done every year heretofore, or abandon the contest. In view of that state of things, the executive department of our Government can, by negotiation, settle the question in a short time, so that Cuba shall be an independent nation, and the great Republic will welcome the patriots of Cuba as a sister republic.

In the war between England and Spain, before our Revolution, England attempted to wrest Cuba from Spain, and then of the men from Connecticut and Massachusetts who under the British flag attempted to take Cuba, of all who landed upon the island, only a small remnant returned to their homes. The climate did for them what the climate has done for the Spanish soldier and would do for ours in the rainy season.

In conclusion, I think the time is near at hand when this Government should recognize the independence of this people as a sister republic struggling as did our fathers for the great principles of our own Declaration of Independence. When that is done, this Government must be ready to see to it that recognition secures the independence of this people. [Loud applause on the Republican side.]

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